

THE HERITAGE OF CAIN

THE DAILY SERIAL

HOME

By ISABEL OSTRANDER

PAGES

SMATHER POOP?



THE HERITAGE OF CAIN

A GREAT BIG THRILLING STORY

BY ISABEL OSTRANDER

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CHAPTER III (Continued).

MADGE motioned the rest out to the veranda, and after she had opened Dyart's shirt at the throat and covered him carefully with a rug, she joined them.

"Lucille, would you be afraid to sit with Dyart for just a few minutes?" she asked.

"We don't want the servants to know anything about what has happened just yet, and he might say something about it in his delirium. He will be all right there on the couch."

"I only want you to be at hand in case he wakes again, to moisten his lips with the brandy. It's all we can do for him until we can get a doctor. Where is the nearest one, Robin?"

"Only about four miles off—I'll go at once for him! The motor boat's no use to me—the doctor lives over on Deer pond, and I'll have to cross the carry."

"I'll take one of the canoes. I say, you should we notify? I mean about what has happened?"

"Upon my soul, I haven't the least idea. Marshall or sheriff or some one."

"Oh, the doctor will attend to all that by phone when he comes," broke in Madge impatiently. "How soon do you think you can get him here, Robin?"

"Not under two hours at best," replied Robin anxiously. "But I think you'd better call up police headquarters. Albany and notify them, Bertram. It's the nearest city, and they can take what measures they think best."

"All right; I will as soon as you're off," agreed Bertram.

"And how about wiring to New York for some detectives?" Robin went on.

"That ought to be done without delay," said Madge. "Look here," interrupted Philip Merriman suddenly. "You've heard of that fellow Yorke?"

"Franklin Yorke? I should say so!" exclaimed Robin. "Detective the government employed what ambassador was assassinated last year? What about him?"

"He's got a lodge near here, hasn't he? Somewhere over the back trail toward Bittern lake?"

"Yes, and he's there now, but it won't do us any good. He never rests until he's on the verge of a nervous breakdown, and when he does decide to take a vacation he won't come out of his seclusion for any price which can be offered him, or any case, no matter how important or baffling, until his own good time."

"Robin spoke despondently. "He'd be the very man, but there's no chance of getting him."

"Why don't you remember," Madge chimed in, "only last week the papers were full of his refusal to take charge of some murder case in 'Cade'?"

"Nevertheless," pursued Philip, "if you've got some sort of a conveyance, get me over the road trail in any kind of time I'll have him back here in a couple of hours!"

"Oh, do you think you could persuade him to come, really?"

"I am quite certain of it," Philip spoke earnestly. "I've known him for a number of years, and once I was able to give him some valuable information in one of his cases—the supposed suicide of Vernon, the president of the Eureka Life Insurance Company. Do you remember?"

"I held the threads of the mystery in my hands and didn't know it, and put him on the right track to the solution. He never forgets, and he'll do this now for me, I'm sure."

"If you can get him it will be the greatest thing any one can do for us," cried Robin in gratitude.

"You'll get back before I will—take him up to that room and let him examine everything. Here is the key—I've looked the door, if he can't find the door-wrench who is responsible for last night's work, no one can."

"Come around to the stables now with me and I'll give you a team of the strongest horses and a light wagon. You can do it in two hours, I'm sure."

"Robin started off with feverish energy. "Only he's not off on some thing else!"

shiver of repulsion. Then she pulled herself together.

"Why, of course. You may serve it out here on the porch. You'll have some won't you?" to Bertram.

"Thanks, no—we'd just finished when Robin came."

"Well—serve it just for three, then, please."

"Very well, ma'am; but—please, we all want to know if the mistress is better. And can't we, none of us, do nothing?"

"The concern in the uncouth girl's face was very real, and Madge said quite gently:

"No, there is nothing anyone can do. The doctor will be here in a few hours. If Mary or the guide, Jacques, comes back please let me know at once."

"Then as the girl withdrew she added to Bertram:

"The very thought of food is repugnant, but I must make some sort of pretense; the servants must not suspect the true state of things until the authorities have full charge."

"Of course, I see. You're a mighty brave and a mighty sensible woman, who more, Mrs. Ashley?"

"Not very brave, I'm afraid," she said wistfully. "I feel just now as if the world has crashed down about my ears."

"He hasn't stirred since I went in," came in Lucille's quivering voice from under the eaves.

"Then it's safe to leave him for a little while," returned Madge.

"Come out with me, and have some coffee, and afterward I'll watch by him until the doctor comes."

"Coffee, Oh, I couldn't," cried Lucille.

"You must," Madge said, firmly. "If you're going to stay and help us, you must keep your wits up—it won't do to have you ill, you know, Lucille. Here comes the tray now. You must drink some for Victor's sake."

"Robin came across the lawn as she poured the steaming coffee, and she called softly to him, and forced him to drink a cup of it, to give him strength for his journey."

"Haven't that doctor got a phone?" asked Bertram suddenly. "We were fools not to think of that!"

"A phone? A smile flitted across Robin's pale lips."

"No, I thought of that at once. He's not trying to build up a practice here in the woods—just roughing it here for a rest and vacation. I'm off now—I'm glad you made me take that coffee. I feel better for it. No change in Dy, I suppose."

"Madge shook her head.

"No, I think he'll be the same until you get the doctor here. But don't lose any time, is Mr. Merriman off?"

"Yes, he ought to be back by about half an hour," as Robin put down his cup and turned, a hearty, merry halloo rang across the lawn.

"They all turned, almost at the sound, which seemed almost a profanation in the midst of their tragedy and grief, and beheld a tall, blond young giant striding across the lawn, his arms encumbered with rifles and fishing rods, while a huge wicker basket hung from one shoulder."

"Good God!" groaned Robin. "I forgot all about his coming today! It's Frederick Blaisdell!"

"Yes!" How about her other two roles—actress and stenographer—and her disappearance from each of them?"

"Oh, you're mistaken, of course," conjectured Freddie. "Chance resemblance—it often deceives anybody."

"Very well, then," continued Bertram, imperturbably. "If she was just an ordinary housemaid, wouldn't she have faltered, or screamed and aroused the house, when she came suddenly upon the body of her mistress, wailing in a pool of blood?"

"Good heavens!" Freddie cried. "I understood Mrs. that tall, good-looking person you presented me to a while ago—Ashley, isn't it? I thought it was she who discovered the murder?"

"At precisely an hour before her disappearance was discovered Mary left the kitchen with a tray containing early morning chocolate for Mrs. Van Rensselaer."

"When Mrs. Ashley entered Mrs. Van Rensselaer's room later, to see why she didn't come down, the bedroom door was closed, and inside the room, in a little stand beside the bed stood the tray of chocolate, untouched, and not six feet away the body lay stretched upon the floor."

"If that was an ordinary housemaid, why did she, on discovering the crime, quietly steal out, without a word to anyone of what she had seen, go to her room, search frantically among her things for some particular object she should not leave behind her, and then disappear, leaving all her other belongings scattered about?"

"What can you make of that?"

"It's a power!" he admitted. "Unless, of course, she was afraid, in her ignorance, that the crime would be fastened upon her, since she was the first to discover it."

"There is that supposition, too," conceded Bertram, quietly. "Although it isn't a likely one. In the first place, the girl was far too ignorant. Her manner, her hurried leave of the doctor's lodge, to persuade him to take the case for the family, and I've got to give them an hour's start and then phone police headquarters at Albany."

"That will give Yorke a chance to look around before a horde of up-State police courtiers, detectives, and reporters swarm all over the place."

"A Continuation of This Story Will Be Found in Tomorrow's Issue of The Times."

"By the way, what does she look like—this elusive young woman?" asked Freddie.

"Well, she's really a very pretty girl—remarkably pretty, in fact. Lots of reddish-brown hair curling all over her head; long, sweeping eyelashes, big, soft, brown eyes, with a slight cast in one of 'em—now I think of it—tall, slender, trim figure—say, what's the matter with you, Freddie? Don't you tell me you recognize her, too?"

"No," began Freddie, when a low voice from the easement just behind them made them start.

"Perhaps Mr. Blaisdell sees in your description a resemblance to some one he has often seen in General Kennedy's household?" remarked Mrs. Ashley.

"I don't know, I don't understand," said Freddie, in stiff amazement.

"One of the references which Mary, this maid who has disappeared, brought to poor Victoria was one from the general's niece, Miss Kennedy."

"Really? You surprise me. Miss Kennedy, as I think you know, Mrs. Ashley, is my fiancée. I must tell her of this curious circumstance; she would remember the girl, of course, and very probably know of some clue which would help to trace her in some way. It's funny I don't recall noticing any housemaid in their home at all resembling Bertram's description."

"Oh," said Madge, quietly. "I thought very possibly you had."

"Freddie eyed her narrowly, but her face, with the trace of her tempestuous grief still dominating it, gave no hint of having observed his start of surprise at the description of the missing girl."

"What have you done about notifying the authorities and setting on the trail of this girl?" asked Freddie, after his scrutiny had seemed to satisfy him, and he had turned again to Bertram.

"Robin has gone in a canoe for the nearest doctor, as you know when he took his hurried leave of you—the doctor's over on Deer Pond. Phil's off up the back trail to Franklin Yorke's lodge, to persuade him to take the case for the family, and I've got to give them an hour's start and then phone police headquarters at Albany."

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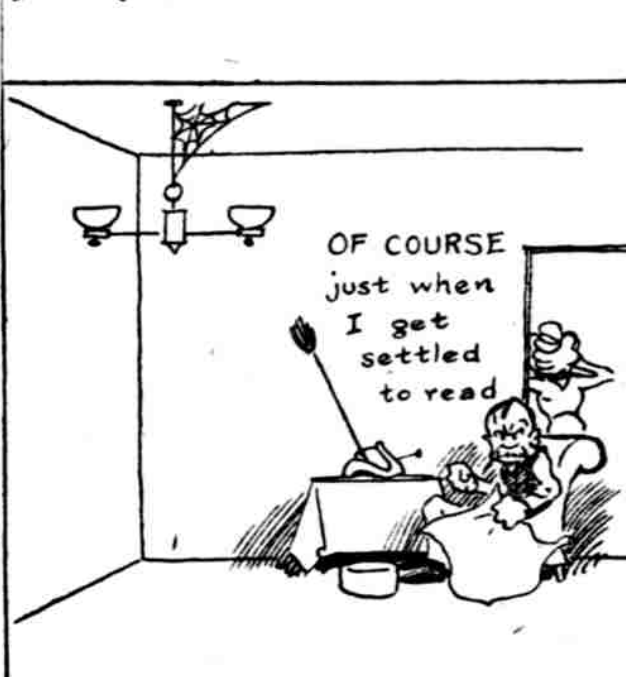
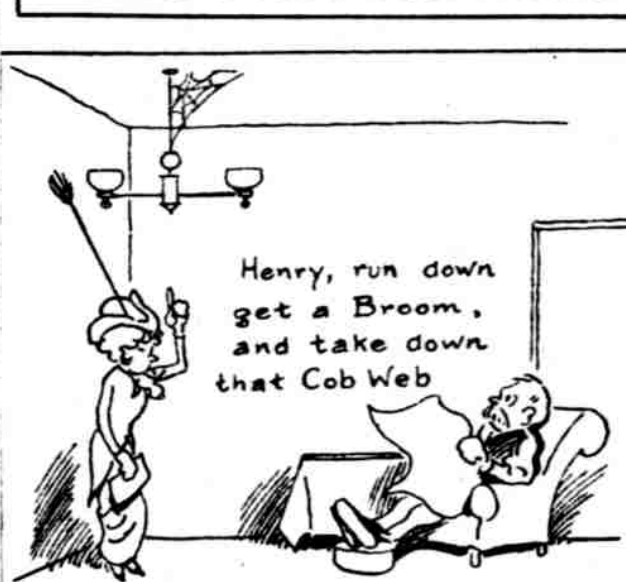
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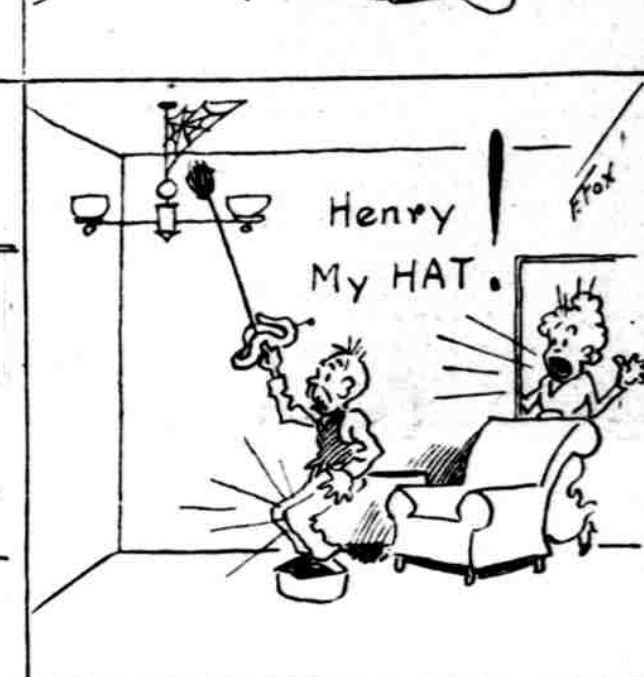
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CHAPTER IV.

"B" Young, beautiful, rich! I love with my husband—known by everybody since she was born, no possible secret in her life—and then murdered in cold blood during the night, in her own home! It's horrible—it seems almost grotesquely unreal and impossible!"

Frederick Blaisdell and Bertram were discussing the tragedy on the veranda, while within the hall Lucille lay curled up on a settee, exhausted with her emotion and grief, and in the library Madge administered to the unconscious Dyart.

"On the surface, it seemed like nothing more or less than the work of a madman," replied Bertram. "One was discovered wandering about in the woods, or drowned in some creek in the next few days, nobody would be surprised. It seems as if there could be no other possible hypothesis."

"And yet—I say, if the murder itself seems unreal, you will think that some of the circumstances, which appear now to be in some way connected with it, are utterly preposterous and fantastic—yet, I know they're true, absolutely, although I haven't been able yet to see their actual relation to the killing of Mrs. Van Rensselaer."

"Circumstances? What circumstances?"

"A new parlor maid arrived two days ago, and the first time I saw her I recognized her. It was Marie Burdard, the hit of 'The Aerophone Girl' last winter, do you remember?"

"No, I don't. But you see I only got home from Petersburg in the early summer."

"That's not. Forget you were a perfectly good diplomat by now," remarked Bertram. "Well, old Phil recognized her, too, only he thought she was a stenographer. Jack Ward had in his office for two weeks last spring."

"We compared notes, and we were convinced it was one and the same girl, masquerading for some purpose of her own, and this morning, early, we met Robin down here at the beachhouse and told him. He laughed at us at first, but we left him half convinced—I'll water he believes it now!"

"Well, when they rang later for breakfast it was discovered that she had disappeared, and so had one of the guides, Jacques, whom Mrs. Ashley and Robin had seen her talking to an hour and a half before. What do you make of that?"

"That Jacques and the maid, having regaled in the regular, good old fashioned way, that's about all," returned Freddie.



If Coffee Don't Agree Use POSTUM

A prominent Philadelphia physician says:

"If, on discontinuing coffee, you feel tired, languid, and 'out of sorts,' the coffee had better be forever discontinued, for you are on the verge of inebriety."